

# **Sin Against The Holy Spirit**

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**October 7, 2011**

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## The Unpardonable Sin

Matt. 12:22-32

Much misunderstanding prevails concerning the “*sin against the Holy Spirit*”. Many have concluded that this “*unpardonable sin*” may be committed today; consequently, the guilty persons have no hope of salvation.

### What is sin against the Holy Spirit?

Is it an “*unpardonable sin*”? There must be an answer in the Holy Scriptures.

Strong’s Concordance:

Blaspheme: 0988 *blasphemia* {blas-fay-me'-ah} from 989 Slander, detraction, speech injurious to another’s good name. Impious and reproachful speech injurious to divine majesty. KJV: blasphemy 16, railing 2, evil speaking

Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words:

Blaspheme: From *blapto*, to injure, and *pheme*, speech. Abusive speech, evil speaking. Also translated as *railing*.

The Holy Spirit is a person. The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit was an intentional, malicious offense against Him.

There is only one specific incident recorded in the Bible which can truly be said to be the “*sin against the Holy Spirit*”. The record of this incident is found in Matt. 12:22-32:

Matt. 12:22-32, “*Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he*

*will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."*

## **Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit**

There can be no doubt about it. Jesus declared these people had sinned against the Holy Spirit by blaspheming against Him.

Jesus had performed a great miracle and the people were amazed and exclaimed, *"Is not this the son of David?"* But the Pharisees said, *"This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils."*

Jesus replied that He cast out devils, not by Beelzebub, but *"by the Spirit of God"*. The Holy Spirit performed this deed through Christ.

The Pharisees accused Jesus of using the prince of the devils to perform the miracle; therefore, they blasphemed (spoke against, sinned against) the Holy Spirit, who performed the miracle through Christ.

They recognized that miracles were performed at the hand of Jesus, but they rejected the involvement of the Holy Spirit by saying Jesus performed these miracles by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.

## **Cannot be forgiven**

As a result of the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, Jesus announced that these Pharisees had committed an unpardonable sin.

Matt. 12:32, *"And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."*

Observe that Jesus declared, “...whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

- First, “...it shall not be forgiven him”.
- Secondly, “...neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

## What is meant by “neither in the world to come”?

Does not this expression suggest, then, that there will be sins forgiven in *the world to come*?

We know that there will be no sins forgiven in eternity, the world to come. Sins have to be forgiven in this life, if they can be forgiven.

Christ was not referring to eternity when He said, “neither in the world to come”.

World: Vine’s. Aion {ahee-ohn} an age, a period of time.

The NKJV has, “*Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.*”

This is more enlightening.

Actually, Jesus declared to those blaspheming Pharisees that they sinned, or blasphemed, against the Holy Spirit, who performed these miracles through Him and they would not be forgiven in that “age” (Jewish age), neither in the “age” to come (Christian).

Jesus performed His miracles during the Jewish age; the apostles performed their miracles during the Christian age. This sin was unpardonable.

Jesus said they could believe that He was the Son of God by the works that He performed.

John 10:36-38, “*Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.*”

## Can man sin against the Holy Spirit today?

Many sincere people have been led to believe that one may sin against the Holy Spirit today, thereby committing an unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, just as the Pharisees did on that occasion.

But it must be remembered that Jesus declared that there is a difference in the consequences of sinning against the Holy Spirit and sinning against Christ.

Matt. 12:32, *“And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”*

When Jesus was on the earth, the words He spoke were His, but the miracles that He performed were done by the Holy Spirit within Him.

There was to be no forgiveness of sins against the Holy Spirit, but all sins against Christ might be forgiven.

Actually, the question is, “Do men today sin against the Holy Spirit, or sin against Christ?” Or, we might say, “Are man’s sins today charged against Christ or against the Holy Spirit?”

Some believe the unforgivable sin is not believing the Bible is the word of God and some believe it is not believing that Jesus is the Son of God. In either case, if this sin of unbelief is the sin against the Holy Spirit, does that mean that once an unbeliever that person can never change his mind and repent? Paul says a person can change. Take the following example:

1 Cor. 7:12-16, *“But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”*

The unbelieving spouse can repent and accept Jesus Christ. Unbelief of the word of God or unbelief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is not a sin against the Holy Spirit.

The blasphemy committed by Saul (later Paul) was against Christ, not the Holy Spirit. Before his conversion he did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. He stood by and agreed with the crucifixion of Jesus because he rejected that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. He did not believe in the gospel of Christ that was taught by the Christians. He rejected this gospel. He persecuted the church because of this unbelief.

And if the sin against the Holy Spirit is rejecting the word of God or rejecting Christ is being the Son of God, why did God choose him to be an apostle? Why was Paul even allowed to become a Christian? If this was the case, then why was not blasphemy of the Holy Ghost applied to Saul? Was Saul a blasphemer? Paul said he was, but it was not blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; it was blasphemy against Christ.

1 Tim. 1:12-13, *“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”*

Saul’s unbelief and railing was against Christ and not against the Holy Spirit. The blasphemy done by the Pharisees in our reading was against the Holy Spirit when they believed the miracles Jesus performed were accomplished by the devil and not by the Holy Spirit.

In fact, Jesus said Saul’s persecution was against Him. Acts 8:3-5, *“And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.”*

The main purpose of the miracles of Jesus Christ and the apostles was to show that God was with them and authenticated that the words that they spake came from God. It was proof that God was with them.

- Mark 16:20, *“And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”*
- Heb. 2:4, *“God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”*

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles in all truth which was the words Jesus commanded the Holy Spirit to give them. The miracles the apostles performed were accomplished by the Holy Spirit who dwelt within them.

John 16:13-14, *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you*

*things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”*

It was an unpardonable sin to claim that the Holy Spirit did not cause these miracles. These miracles ceased to occur after the age of the apostles and those whom they laid on their hands.

Jesus gave miraculous gifts “til” “the unity of the faith”.

*Eph. 4:7-13, “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”*

The “unity of the faith” was the faith as a unit — completely revealed.

*1 Cor. 13:9-10, “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”*

The miracles that the Holy Spirit provided them to confirm the word ceased when the apostles put together the complete word of God.

- *1 Cor. 13:8, “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”*
- *1 Cor. 13:10, “But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”*

The perfected word of God was called the perfect law of liberty.

*James 1:25, “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”*

We do not have the miracles performed by the Holy Spirit today. They ceased during the age of the apostles.

## Impossible to be saved?

Some religious teachers have referred to Heb. 6:4-6 as evidence that man may sin against the Holy Spirit today and find it impossible to be forgiven.

Heb. 6:4-6, *“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”*

Impossible: Strong’s, 102 adunatos {ad-oo’-nat-os} without strength, weakly. In other words, extremely hard, but not impossible as we have come to know the word.

This scripture says nothing about “impossible to be forgiven”. The difficulty in this case of apostasy is that of the person does not want to repent because of his circumstance of turning away from God. It is very hard for him to repent.

It doesn’t say that it would be impossible to obtain forgiveness if he did repent. The text specifically declares that the sin of this person is against Christ, and not the Holy Spirit.

Heb. 6:6, ... *seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”*

Jesus said in Matt. 12:32 that any sin against Him would be forgiven. Matt. 12:32, *“And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”*

Sin or blasphemy against Christ may be forgiven. Paul’s sin of blasphemy against Christ was forgiven.

The sin of Heb. 6:6 is against Christ, therefore, is not an unpardonable sin!

The 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews does not refer to the sin against the Holy Spirit, or the unpardonable sin. This sin is against Christ, not the Holy Spirit.

## No more sacrifice for sins

It has been said that Heb. 10:26 refers to the sin against the Holy Spirit, or the unpardonable sin.

Heb. 10:26, *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,”*

This text does not even imply the “sin against the Holy Spirit”.

The apostle is revealing the contrast between the sin offerings under the Old Law and the one sacrifice for sin under the New Testament law, the one and only true sacrifice for sins. There is none other and there will be no other. Read the context of the entire 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews.

God’s Son is the one and only perfect offering!

## Sin unto death

Is the sin against the Holy Spirit the sin referred to in 1 John 5:16-17, sometimes referred to as “the unpardonable sin”?

1 John 5:16-17, *“If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.”*

From this statement it is evident that one may be guilty of sin in so much that there is no need to pray for him.

There is no evidence, however, that this is the sin against the Holy Spirit, about which our Lord spoke in Matt. 12:22-32.

Many jump on the statement of John, *“...There is a sin unto death ... and claim this sin (singular) refers to the unpardonable sin. However, they fail to grasp his other statement, “...there is a sin (singular) not unto death...”*.

To understand this statement it is necessary to consider the context from which the passage is quoted. Let us observe the 7<sup>th</sup> through the 9<sup>th</sup> verses of 1 John 1:

1 John 1:7-9, *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

The apostle declares that Christ is *“faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

All unrighteousness may be forgiven!

The conditions of pardon for the Christian’s sins include repentance, confession of sins, and prayer.

In addition to the statement of John, which promises forgiveness of the Lord if we confess our sins, James added:

James 5:16, “*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*”

From these scriptures we are forced to the conclusion that the Lord will forgive all sins a brother confesses. The “*sin not unto death*” is a forgiven sin.

If a brother is guilty of certain sins and will not repent and confess his sins, there is no need for Christians to pray for such a brother until he does. The Lord will not forgive that person until he truly repents.

## **Unpardonable, or unpardoned sin?**

There are some in the religious world that believe that to reject the word of God or to reject Jesus Christ as the Son of God is to commit the unpardonable sin. That goes beyond what the scriptures teach. There are others that say that if you do not believe in the miraculous gifts today then you are committing the unpardonable sin.

But as I have already pointed out, those miraculous signs had ceased at the end of the apostolic age.

Those in the apostolic age that witnessed the proof of the power of the Holy Spirit, and then they still rejected it, committed the unpardonable sin. There is no way they could accept the word of God when they reject the proof that the Holy Spirit provided them.

Again, hear the words of the Lord:

John 10:36-38, “*Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.*”

We don’t have the “proof” demonstrated today in a miraculous form.

Today we believe even though we have not seen the miracles.

Heb. 11:1, “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*”

The Bible teaches us that it is imperative that we believe before we can be pardoned.

Heb. 11:6, “*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*”

Until we believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God then we are unpardoned. Once we believe and obey His word, then we are pardoned. To not believe in Christ is a sin against Christ, and is correctable. It is not the unpardonable sin.

## **Not willing that any should perish**

We are told in Rom. 6:23 that the wages of sin are death.

Unforgiven sins will cause the soul to be lost in hell.

Christ invites all men to be saved, saying: Matt. 11:28-30, *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

He doesn't wish for anyone to perish, but to change their minds and repent.

2 Pet. 3:9, *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”*

The sinner has to obey the gospel of Christ to obtain pardon for his sins. 2 Thess. 1:7-10, *“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”*

Unforgiven sins will condemn souls in the Day of Judgment. Many unforgiven souls will spend eternity in hell because of unbelief, disobedience, and hardness of heart.

## **Conclusion**

Are your souls pardoned or unpardoned?

Regardless of what your sins may have been, Christ died for you.

1 Cor. 15:3, *“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;”*

Forgiveness is no cheap thing. It cost the life of the Son of God. Without this sacrifice and atonement by His blood there would be no pardon. But the Lord can only forgive those who seek His

forgiveness through faith and obedience to the father's will. Luke 6:46, "*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*"

Are your sins forgiven or unforgiven? Don't wait until it is too late. Unpardoned sins at the Judgment means one is lost for eternity!

The following are the steps necessary to make that happen:

- **Faith.** Heb. 11:6, "*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*" When I was in high school (I was about 17 years old), a neighbor boy my same age told me he was an atheist. Since I had been baptized, I took the opportunity to talk to him about the scriptures. He told me that he could see that living the life of a Christian was good, but he wasn't sure if he believed there was a God. But to be on the safe side, maybe he should go to church, and when he dies and stands before God (if there is a God) on the day of Judgment (if there is a Judgment), maybe if God sees that he has gone to church and lived a good life that God would send him to heaven (if there is a heaven), and not to hell (if there is a hell). I told him, "It doesn't work that way. You have to believe in Him with all your heart or you cannot please Him."
- **Repentance.** Acts 2:38, "*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" Acts 11:18, "... *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*" If while you were sleeping, you heard a noise in the other room, and you think to yourself, "There's a burglar in my house!" So you reach for your cell phone, and as quietly as you can, you call the police, tell them there is a burglar in your house, and you give them your address. Soon, you heard them arrive and capture the thief. He yells, "I'm sorry; I'm sorry!" What is he sorry for? He is sorry that he got caught; not that he stole. In true repentance the thief would be sorry that he ever stole and wants to change his life so that he would never steal again. That is true repentance. It is a change of mind that brings about a change of action. That is what we have to do before we can become a Christian.

- **Confession.** Rom. 10:9-10, “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*” What do we confess? That we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Note that in the above scriptures that faith (believing), repentance, and confession are “**UNTO**” righteousness, life, or salvation. “Unto” means toward something; not that one has already attained.

- **Baptism.** It is baptism where righteousness, life, and salvation are attained. Jesus, himself, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, “*But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*” (Matt. 3:14-17). Jesus was baptized because God said it was the right thing to do. Did you see how pleased God was about Jesus being baptized? Jesus also said “*it becometh **us** to fulfil all righteousness.*” We are baptized because it fulfills His righteousness, not because it is of our righteousness.

In fact, if we are not baptized, we are still in our sins. “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*” (Acts 2:38). Peter, what did you say the reason of baptism is? “*for the remission of sins*”. Why would anyone want to leave out the step that removes our sins?

Jesus commanded that to reach salvation we must be baptized. “*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth **and** is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” (Mark 16:15-16).

Ananias told Saul (before he was rename Paul) the very same thing, “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” (Acts 22:16). Baptism is a requirement given by God.

Baptism is called a burial. *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”* (Rom. 6:4). Our old man is to be dead to us. *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”* (Rom. 6:3-6). Baptism is God’s blueprint for applying the blood of Christ in our lives by baptism. We are free from our old sins only when we are baptized.

This doesn’t mean “sprinkling. The scripture above says baptism is a burial. We don’t take a dead body to the cemetery and sprinkle a little dirt over it; we bury the body.

If you have not become a member of Christ's flock, won't you consider it today?









